THE

EVIDENCE;

OR,

Religious and Moral Gazette.

RELIGION AND MORALITY ARE THE BASIS OF HUMAN FELICITY.

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No. X.

TO YOUNG PEOPLE, &c.

Containing objections to what has been asserted in the foregoing numbers.

1st. OBJECION.

INFIDELS affirm with no little confidence that the prophesies were written after the predicted events had actually taken place, and of course are of no avail in vindicating the divine authenticity of the scriptures. This objection has been made with particular reference to the prophecy of Moses respecting the calamities which should befal the Jews in case of their revolt from the worship of the true God. The enemies of revealed religion cannot help observing a most perfect coincidence between the predictions of the divine Legate and the sufferings and state of the Jewish nation in its overthrow and dispersion. Since Moses is almost literal in his prophetic description, the only method of evading the force of the argument in favor of his divine inspiration, is placing the prediction posterior to the event. Accordingly, it is said that the prophecy of Moses recorded in the 28th Chap. of Deuteronomy was given out subsequent to the destruction of Jerusalem. This objection is raised because no other could be devised. It is resorted to for the sake of aiding a desperate cause. For every one who is conversant with correct historic fact, must know, that the Septuagint containing the Five books of Moses was translated from the original Hebrew into the Greek language at least two hundred years before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This work was patronized and executed by order of Plotemy Philadelphus king of Egypt, and is now extant. This translation is acknowledged to be a correct one by the Jewish Rabbins who have always been particularly cautious in preserving not only their own history, but the books of the old testament free from the least degree of human mixture. The objection appears equally weak in reference to the fulfilment of prophecy in general. It is futile, and therefore of no force.

2. IT is objected, that if God were to make a revelation, he would communicate it to the whole world, whereas but a very small proportion of mankind have any knowledge of the scriptures. This objection loses its force, if we admit the justice of God in his government of the world. Nothing is more apparent, than the disparity of God's treatment of the nations of the earth in

his providential government. And dare we say God is unjust in this disparity! If we should say the scriptures are untrue, because all men are not acquainted with them, we might with equal reason object against the equity of God, in his providence. The objection lies with equal force against the constitution and course of nature as against the scriptures. Besides it is in consequence of rejecting the true God in the first instance, that all men have not the bible in their hands. This objection has nothing to sustain it.

3. It is alledged, that if God were to give a revelation to the world, he would make such an one as men could comprehend. Here, as well as elsewhere, let us speak for God, lest we fall in judgment. Were God to reveal his mind to the world, is it to be supposed that the creatures of a day would take in the whole at a single glance or in the limited period of a short life? If we could now comprehend the length and breadth of the revealed system, the business of research would be at an end. If the scriptures are to be given up because we cannot comprehend them, must we not by the same rule, give up our belief of the divine existence, because the subject is too elevated for the entire development of the human mind? God's works, which prove his existence are as unsearchable as his word, and it is the glory of both, that they open a field for endless contemplation and improvement in the knowledge and enjoyment of God. This objection is an argument for the truth of God's word.

4. On the supposition that the scriptures were true, yet they are so ancient, that by this time they have lost their original purity by passing through the hands of so many transcribers, and therefore are not to be relied on as authentic and genuine. This objection so far from having any solidity carries its own confutation. For if we suppose, that God in infinite goodness was once pleased to communicate to sinful creatures a special revelation of his will, we must suppose the same goodness would induce him to preserve it from being corrupted. It is inconsistent with the wisdom and goodness of God to suppose the scriptures mutilated and different from what they once were. If God once saw reason for giving a revelation of his mind for the instruction of his creatures, the same reason must induce him to preserve it from spoliation. We must all see that God is able to secure his word free from the mixture of human error. And it is true, God has so circumstanced the world, that it has in no period been possible that the original scriptures should undergo the least change. For from the very first communication of God's mind by a special revelation, men who have been allowed the perusal of it, have entertained very different ideas of its contents. Even up to the present period there is a wide disagreement respecting the doctrines taught in the scriptures.—This clashing of opinion has always been an effectual bar against adding to or diminishing the sacred contents. For on the supposition, that one sectary to help its course, should interpolate or expunge from the original texts, the opposing party would instantly detect the fraud. We very well know, that at this time, it would be impossible to alter the letter of the bible without discovery. And it never have been less practicable than at this time. Opposite sectaries have existed from the beginning, which circumstance has been overruled by God for the preservation of his word without mixture of human inven-

tion. The Jews also have in their hand copies of the Old testament of earlier date than the Christian era which correspond with our translation. Copies also of the New testament as early as the fourth century have been preserved to this time. So that nothing is more evident, than that the whole of the bible is handed down to us exactly as first revealed.

5. But can the scriptures be a revelation from God, since men entertain so many different opinions respecting them. This has often been named as a very formidable objection. Admitting the scriptures to contain a perfect system of religion, which if from God, they must, might it not be expected, that sinful beings would disagree respecting its contents? Difference of sentiment about the bible arises from imperfection in us, and not from fault in itself. Should we say that the bible can not be a revelation from God because of the multiplicity of opinions concerning the doctrines it contains, we might with equal reason contend, that there is no true theory of the solar system, because men have entertained various sentiments on the subject. As respects the real friends of revealed truth, it is not true that they have disagreed in one essential point. They have been, and are still called by different names. But their sentiments have accorded in all the cardinal doctrines.

6. Has not the bible occasioned innumerable evils in the world? It is true the wicked have perverted this greatest of all blessing as they have every other. Men under the cloak of religion have gone to all lengths in sin. But what then? does this in the least invalidate the excellency of the Christian religion, that men have abused it. Do we say that the common bounty on which we live, is no blessing because so often perverted and abused? Or do we say there is no genuine specie because there is much counterfeit? We might as well say this as to say the bible is untrue, because the wicked have made themselves vile under its covert. This objection gives way like the foregoing, and so would every other. For if a system is demonstrably true, objections will fall like stubble before the desolating flames. And thus all the objections to disprove the divine authenticity of the scriptures amount to nothing on examination. They fall at the slightest touch, and the barriers of sacred truth are supported by a conclusiveness which all the powers of earth and hell will never be able to resist.

E.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS,

With respect to the persuation of a person being truly converted.

Grace may be really in the soul, though it do not appear gloriously to it. Though all graces exist where ever one exists, yet all graces are not always exercised together. The actings of sin and grace, in the affections and passions, are not so much to be regarded in the examination of our state, as their actings in the mind and will, where sin hath its principal strength. True repentance consists in a sweet melting of heart for sin, and loathing and forsaking it, rather than in any sensible apprehensions of God's wrath. The spirit of bondage, and a mere law-work, do, of themselves, produce bad effects. There may be love to God, and sincerity in the heart, where God hides his face, and smites one *in all the labour of his*

hands. The quality, nature, and sincerity of actions and graces, are more to be looked to than their measure. It is the duty of all to believe on Christ, be their state, frame, or way, what it will. Afflictions, spiritual and temporal, though evil in themselves, may flow from God's love, and be intended for good.—God may have heard and accepted a prayer, which he doth not answer for a long time. God's love to his people is more vented in humbling, strengthening, and sanctifying the soul, than in comforting it with extraordinary raptures. God's love doth not always vent itself in the manner his people wish: instead of removing trouble, he often supports and comforts under it. Christ's love and our happiness appear more in him and his promises, and what he will give, than in what he hath already given. Though true grace itself never perisheth, gracious frames often last but a short time.

As God's mercy and truth are the ground of our hope, joy, life, light and comfort, our sinfulness or weakness should never dicourage us, or make us doubt of heaven. The Lord Jesus may enter into a soul very indiscernibly. God's word, not his dealings with others, is our only rule. In every saint there is indwelling corruption, bent on every wickedness, as well as real grace, which delights in the law of the Lord. At some seasons saints' graces continue in their root, but do not flourish, because it is a spiritual winter. The exercise of faith is most pleasing to God, and profitable to ourselves, and unbelief is most hateful and dishonorable to God, and most prejudicial to us. God's word, and neither books of men, nor providences, nor suggestions, is our only rule of faith and practice. We ought not to look so much on the beginning of a Christian's life or exercises as to the end of it.

TIMOTHY.

An account of the inquisition.

THE prisons of the inquisition are little dark cells, without furniture but a hard quilt; the prisoner is not permitted to see any one except his keeper, in this ceil, who brings his diet with a lamp that burns half an hour, and departs in silence. At the end of three days he is carried to the inquisitor, and takes an oath, to return true answers to all questions which shall be put to him, and to confess all his heresies. If he have no heresies to confess, he is carried back to his doleful dungeon for three days more, to recollect himself, and to call to mind his heresies, his teachers, and his accomplices. Being again brought before the inquisitors, they ask him, where he was born and educated? who were his parents, masters, confessors? when he was last at confession, or the mass? If, in answering all these questions, he cannot be brought to accuse himself, he is sent back again to his dark and dismal prison, and time is given him to pray for repentance. At the end of three days, he is carried again to the inquisitors, who now examine him on the peculiar doctrines of popery, on transubstantiation, on worshipping the host, images, saints, and the Virgin Mary; on the infallibility of the Pope, and his power to pardon sins past, present, and to come, &c. &c. If he answers, that he believes all this, he is then taken to the rack, attended by a notary, who is to write down his confession. Here he remains in torment for one hour by the glass; after which, a surgeon puts his bones in joint, and he is carried back to his cell. And h[illegible]

horrid process is repeated three times, at certain intervals, till the miserable wretch, perhaps, confesses heresies he was never guilty of, or acknowledges that he dare not worship idols. If, after two days, the prisoner affirms that his confession was extorted from him by the torments he underwent, and therefore refuses to sign it, he is again put upon the rack. If he confesses that he did speak heritical words but to save his estate for his family, affirms, that he spake them unadvisedly, he is put upon the rack to prove the truth of this assertion. The prisoner never knows who are his accusers, or what particular words or actions are laid to his charge; nor must his advocate know these things. Witnesses are compelled to give evidence, under pain of greater excommunication; and his own advocate is bound by oath to divulge his client's secrets. When the fatal morning is come, the dominicians begin the procession, followed by the penitents clothed in black, barefooted, and with wax candles in their hands; some have benitoes, and others, who have just escaped being burnt, have inverted flames painted on their garments: then come the negative and relapsed, with flames pointed upwards; then the professsd, with flames painted on their garments and on their breasts, carrying their own pictures, with dogs, serpents, and devils round them, all with open mouths. The familiars and inquisitors close the procession. After prayers and a sermon, the prisoners are delivered over to the secular arm, with earnest entreaties not to touch their blood, or put their life in danger! They are instantly bound in chains, carried to the secular prison for about two hours, then bro't out, chained to stakes about four yards high, seated within half a yard of the top; when the negative and relapsed are strangled, but the honest and professed are solemnly delivered up to the devil; after which, the holy father leaves them; when, their faces being first scorched, the furze is kindled round them, and in about half an hour, in calm weather, or in about two hours in very windy weather, their excruciating torments end.

The Three Questions.

BERNARD'S three questions are worth the asking ourselves, in any enterprise:—1. Is it lawful? May I do it, and not sin? 2. Is it becoming me as a Christian? May I do it, and not wrong my profession? 3. Is it expedient? May I do it and not offend my weak brother?

An incitement to bear sufferings patiently.

I HAVE often thought and meditated on the sufferings of our blessed Lord and Saviour; and have lately occupied on that portion of sacred writ, in the 12th of St. John's Gospel, where Christ, in the view of his sufferings, leaves these memorable words: "If any man serve me, let him follow me!" This passage here quoted, was spoken to Andrew and Philip at that remarkable time, when some Grecians expressed their desire of seeing Jesus: and, what is worthy of notice, Andrew and Philip were among the first disciples of our Lord, and the first to be partakers with him in his sufferings. Indeed, the Apostles and friends of Christ were treated, during their lives, as malefactors: they were imprisoned—they were banished—they wandered about, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, hated,

despised—*they*, of whom the world was not worthy.

AFTER several years thus passed, they, like the prophets and martyrs of the Old Testament, were tortured, not accepting deliverance; they were slain with the sword. Much instruction might be repeated from a recollection of a catalogue of the Apostles, joined in a serious consideration of what was their lot in this world.

Peter was crucified;
Andrew was crucified;
Bartholomew was flayed alive;
John was banished, after having been cast into a caldron of boiling oil;
Two James; one was beheaded; of the other the brains were dashed out;
Philip was stoned;
Thomas stabbed;
Matthew beheaded;
Simon crucified;
Jude shot with arrows;
Matthias stabbed;
Paul beheaded.

WITHIN some few months of the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, the first general persecution broke out. It is one of the honors of the Christian church, that its first persecutor was Nero.

Great numbers of the friends and disciples of the apostles were then cruelly tormented and murdered; as is described in the fifteenth book of the Annals of Tacitus.

Pereuntibus christianis, addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis contecti, laniatu canum interirent, aut crucibus affixi; aut flammandi atque ubi defecisset dies in usum nocturni luminis urerentur. chap. 44. The English of which is: The death of the Christians was made a common sport: they were either clothed with the skins of wild beast, and exposed to the fury of the dogs; fixed to crosses; or consumed by fire. By night they were committed to the flame. Standing at the stake—they were fastened to it by a hook round the neck. Then burning pitch was poured upon their head from a red-hot plate; so that the streams of human juices made a furrow in the sand of the amphitheatre.

THIS holy and illustrious group gained the crown of martyrdom; they readily left every thing to obey the divine call, and they followed their master's path to heaven. Enabled not by the strength of nature or their own resolutions, but by the power of grace; so that the words of Christ were exemplified in them: "he that hateth his life in this world shall have it unto life eternal." Wherefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us run with *patience* the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus, who endured the cross and despised the shame thereof, and the contradiction of sinners against himself; *lest ye be wearied and faint in your mind.*

Extract of a letter from a respectable gentleman in Calcutta, dated August 7, 1807.

"THE missionaries in this country, concerning whom you inquired, are in general, respectable men. Their head, Mr. Carey, is a wonderful man. As an oriental scholar, I mean in the knowledge of languages, he leaves the celebrated Sir William Jones behind him. He is professor of the Sanscrit, the holy language of the Brahmins, in the College of Fort William. Indefat-

igably industrious; mild in his temper, and yet dignified in his manners, he seems admirably qualified as a minister of Christ, and an agent for the propagation of his holy gospel.

"THE subscription has been nobly supported in this country. The Rev. Dr. Buckanan, a high churchman, and a clergyman of great integrity and ability, has so favorable an opinion of these missionaries, that he has subscribed 5000 rupees towards carrying on their translation of the Bible. The society is wealthy, but I can venture to say that they devote their wealth to the purpose for which generous and pious men have deposited it in their hands. The missionaries live together at Serampore, and keep a school, which defrays their private expences. I do sincerely esteem them as a body of men, and, being personally acquainted with some individuals, I know that the purity of their private lives accords with the sanctity of their public ministrations. They are anabaptists."

Panoplist.

RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY, LONDON,

MAY 15, 1806, this society held their seventh annual meeting at St. Paul's coffee-house, London, which was more numerously attended than any former one, and proved a meeting of peculiar interest, from the extended exertions and growing usefulness of that institution.

THE zeal for the diffusion of divine truth, which induced the formation of this society, appears to increase in proportion as new objects present themselves, and as the means of attending to them are afforded to the committee, from whose report it appears, that in the course of the last year, seven new tracts, of the first series, have been published. Five have been translated and published by the society in the Welch language, one in the Gaelic, one in the Spanish, one in the Italian, and two in the German languages. That since the last report, about 600,000 of the first series have been issued from the depository; and that the whole number issued since the commencement of the institution, in 1799, exceeds 2,700,000.

THAT the committee have gratuitously distributed among the army and navy, to foreign prisoners of war, among the Roman Catholics in Ireland, and to other places where the necessity was urgent, 110,000 tracts.

THAT the committee had commenced the important attempt, which was sanctioned by the last annual meeting, of subverting the pernicious tracts, so extensively circulated by hawkers throughout the kingdom, by the publication of a new series of tracts, peculiarly adapted for sale by such persons; designed to be both entertaining and instructive, having cuts, and being printed in the same form as those usually sold by the hawkers; three of which have been translated and published in the Welch language; and, as an inducement to such persons to engage in the sale of them, the committee have fixed the price so low as to yield to the venders and hawkers a profit superior to that on any other tracts hitherto published.

A very extensive correspondence has been opened for the furtherance of this concern, and about 560,000 of the new series of tracts have been

already issued; but as returns have not yet been received from many of the society's agents, the exact number sold cannot be ascertained.

THE committee strongly recommend to their Christian brethren to consider the vast importance of subverting the vicious tracts, and profane ballads, which supply temptation and corruption to the rising generation; and they earnestly entreat every friend to religion and virtue to look around on the shops near his residence, which are the depositories of such vehicles of vice, and to exert his influence to introduce in their place the tracts published by this society; and it is especially desirable that wholesale venders, who at present supply the small shops and hawkers, should be made fully acquainted with the circumstance of the increased profit of two pence in the shilling to be obtained by the sale of them. As it must rejoice the heart of every Christian to be able, in any degree, to eject the poison, or to counteract its deadly influence, let every reader use immediate exertion for that important purpose.

THE committee have recently published a uniform edition of the first series of tracts in two handsome volumes, the price of which is fixed *extremely low*; but as it has necessarily occasioned a heavy expense to the society, they earnestly entreat every friend to promote the sale of them, for the purpose of replenishing the funds, and promoting the interest of the institution.

SEVERAL very encouraging accounts were related, by members present, of the conversion of sinners to God by the reading of tracts published by this society; some of which, we hope, will be made public, as an encouragement to perseverance in the distribution; and as a persuasive to those, who have not yet begun this work, to delay it no longer, and to reflect how many opportunities they have lost of putting tracts into the hands of others, which might have been instrumental in saving souls from eternal punishment, and leading them to joys, which will never cease.

Ev. Mag.

NEW ENGLAND.

THE number of young gentlemen, who received the degree of Bachelor of Aarts, in the different Colleges in New-England, in 1806, follows:

AT Harvard, in Cambridge, (Ms.)	41
Yale, New-Haven, (Con.)	73
Brown, Providence, (R. I.)	18
Dartmouth, Hanover, (N. H.)	25
Williams, Williamstown, (Ms.)	21
Middlebury, Middlebury, (Vt.)	14
Burlington, Burlington, (Vt.)	6
Bowdoin, Brunswick, (Me.)	7
Total,	210
In 1805, the whole number was	188
Increase	22

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